EXHIBIT D

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

Village Theatre

(Originally Germania Theater)
1546-1550 North Clark Street

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, April 3, 2008

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning
Patti A. Scudiero, Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose ten members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

***Cover*: The Village Theatre at 1546-1550 N. Clark Street on the Near North Side. The building is a rare-surviving "first-generation" movie theater in Chicago built in 1916 exclusively for motion picture use. (Photo by Susan Perry, CCL)**

VILLAGE THEATRE
(ORIGINALLY GERMANIA THEATER)

1546-1550 NORTH CLARK STREET
BUILT: **1915-1916**
ARCHITECT: **ADOLPH WOERNER**

The Village Theatre (originally called the Germania Theater) is one of the best-surviving "first-generation" movie theaters in Chicago. Designed by German-born architect Adolph Woerner exclusively for motion picture use, the building was completed in 1916 and was part of a theater chain operated by Herman L. Gumbiner. This fine brick and terra cotta-clad building is a mix of Classical Revival and Renaissance Revival styles, incorporating Germanic symbolism in its details reflecting the area's then-prominent ethnic group. The building served for many decades as the sole movie house in the neighborhood and remains a strong visual landmark on the Near North Side.

EARLY CHICAGO MOVIE THEATERS

The first movie houses in Chicago, built in the first decade of the twentieth century, were family-owned storefront operations known as nickelodeons after the common price of admission. They were sparsely decorated, smoky places, often no more than storefronts with a hanging sheet or a white-washed wall to act as a screen. Chairs were moveable and placed in rows, and at the rear of the room sat the projector with the operator, who might also act as the ticket vendor. This type of theater eventually gained a bad reputation for attracting only the working class and was not considered the type of establishment suitable for women and children. In spite of unsophisticated surroundings and presentations, these early movie theaters attracted ever increasing audiences, spurred by the rise of the motion picture industry and the creation of full-length movies such as *The Great Train Robbery*, filmed in 1903. (Before the movie industry moved to California, Chicago was the center of both the emerging motion picture studio and distribution industries beginning in 1907-08.)

Beginning in 1908, municipal code reforms were passed and nickelodeons moved from storefronts to larger and often more sumptuous buildings (often defunct vaudeville theaters). Since the reforms required operators obtain movie-house licensing, it gave the more affluent clientele a sense of safety and, as a result, raised the level of respectability of the movie house. By the early 1910s, "purpose-built" movie theaters, buildings designed expressly for the showing of motion pictures, began to be built in Chicago. Although larger than nickelodeons, these theaters remained relatively small in scale, fitting easily into neighborhood commercial strips in Chicago's many neighborhoods. The vast majority of these first-generation movie theaters have been demolished or remodeled for other purposes. The Biograph Theater (1914), designated a Chicago Landmark in 2001, and the Village Theatre (1916) are among the best of these that remain.

By the 1920s, Chicago was "the jumpingest movie city in the world and had more plush elegant theatres than anywhere else," according to movie historian Ben Hall. The demand for motion pictures encouraged the construction of larger-scale theaters holding between 2,000 and 4,000 movie-goers. Built by major theater operators such as Balaban and Katz, Lubliner and Trinz, and the Marks Brothers, these movie "palaces"—including the Chicago, Uptown, New Regal, and Congress theaters (designated Chicago Landmarks in 1983, 1991, 1992 and 2002, respectively)—were major centers of entertainment both in the Loop and outlying neighborhoods.

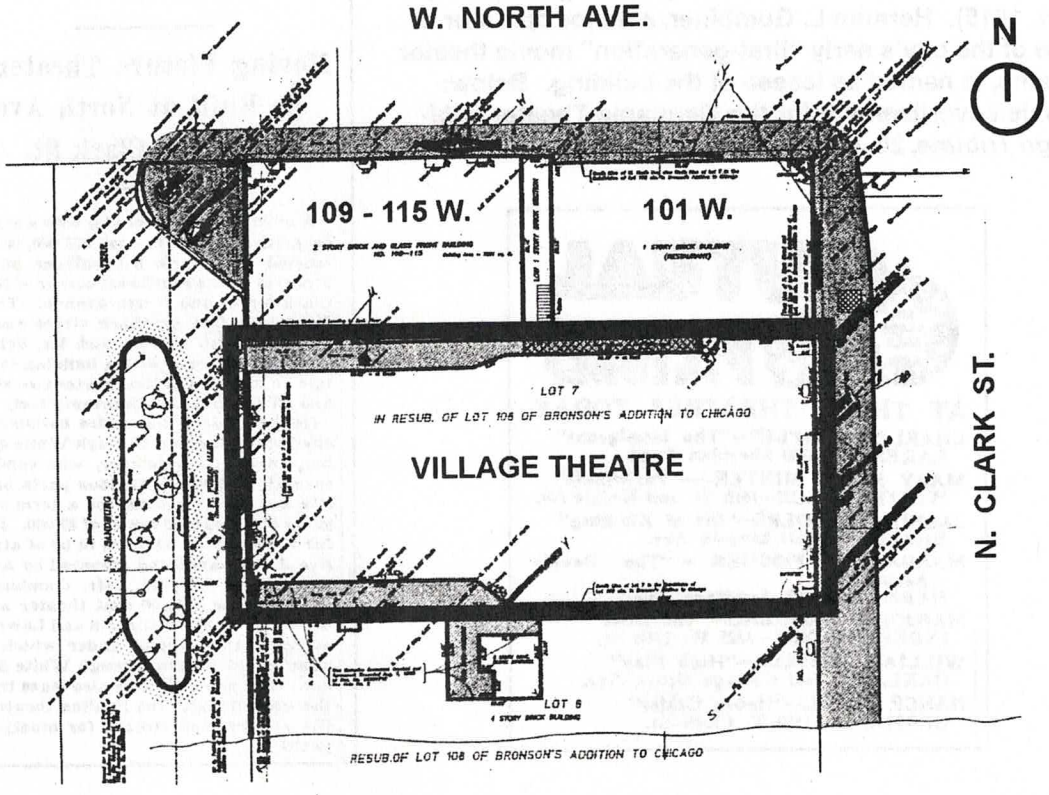
Meant to create an environment of fantastic illusion for movie patrons, the typical movie palace took its design cues from historic architectural revival styles such as Renaissance and Baroque. Its facade would be richly detailed with terra cotta while a lighted marquee and giant sign proclaimed the theater's presence for blocks. Upon entering, a patron experienced a grand lobby, often with sweeping staircases, and a lavish auditorium. With interiors detailed with elaborate stone and plaster work, decorative light fixtures, and plush seats, these theaters became in effect extensions of the films being shown, with their often exotic storylines and locales.

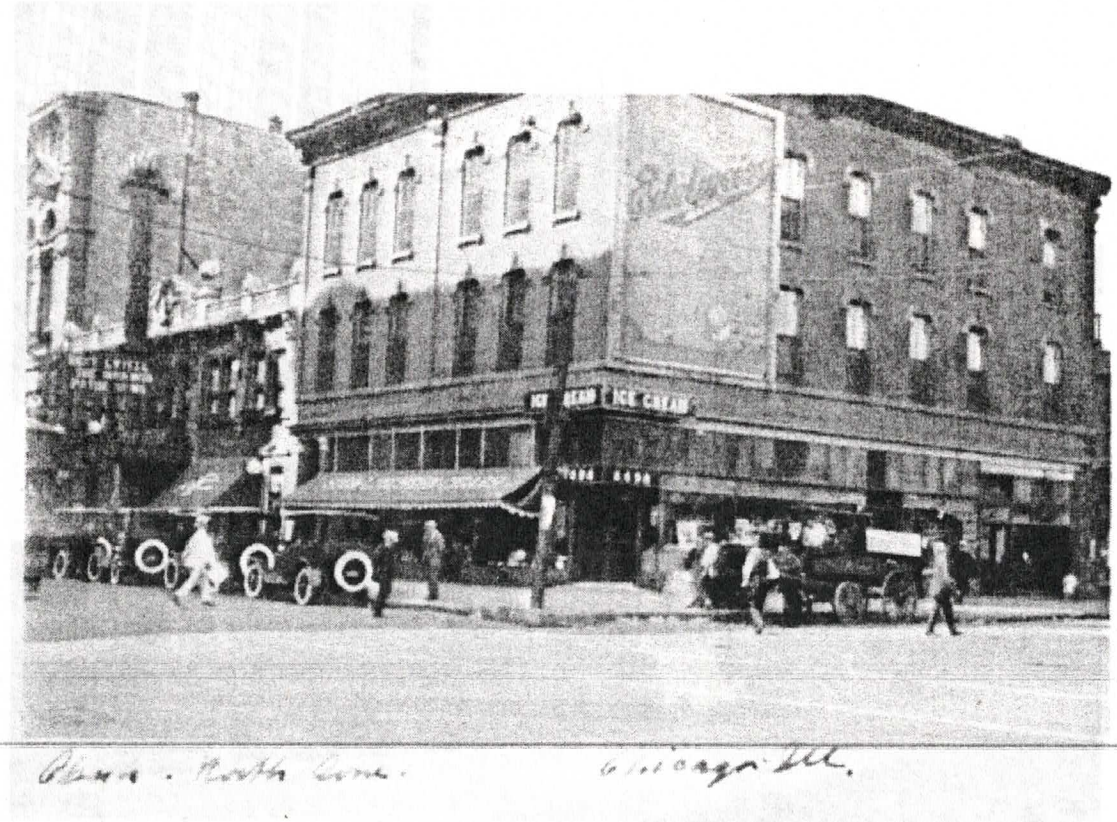
By the end of the 1920s, Chicago had more than thirty of these movie palace theaters. The economic dominance of these later movie theaters caused many of the "first-generation" movie theaters to be converted to non-movie use. In turn, beginning in the 1950s and accelerating in later years, a decline in movie-going, coupled with suburban development and changing motion picture exhibition practice, led to the construction of smaller movie theaters clustered in "multiplexes" and the destruction or drastic remodeling of most of these grandly-scaled movie theaters.

Building Description

The Village Theatre's original owner, German-born Frank Schoeninger, arrived from Newport, Wisconsin, sometime after 1900 and settled in the Lincoln Park area on Wrightwood Ave. In 1911, he purchased a parcel of land located on the southwest corner of Clark St. and North Ave. which was then the epicenter of the German community on the North Side. The parcel,

Above: A current photo of the Village Theatre (with the taller adjacent Germania Club at left). Below: A location map of the Village Theatre (outlined). The building was originally named the Germania Theater, likely due to its proximity to the Germania Club, as well as to attract a more affluent clientele such as frequented the club.





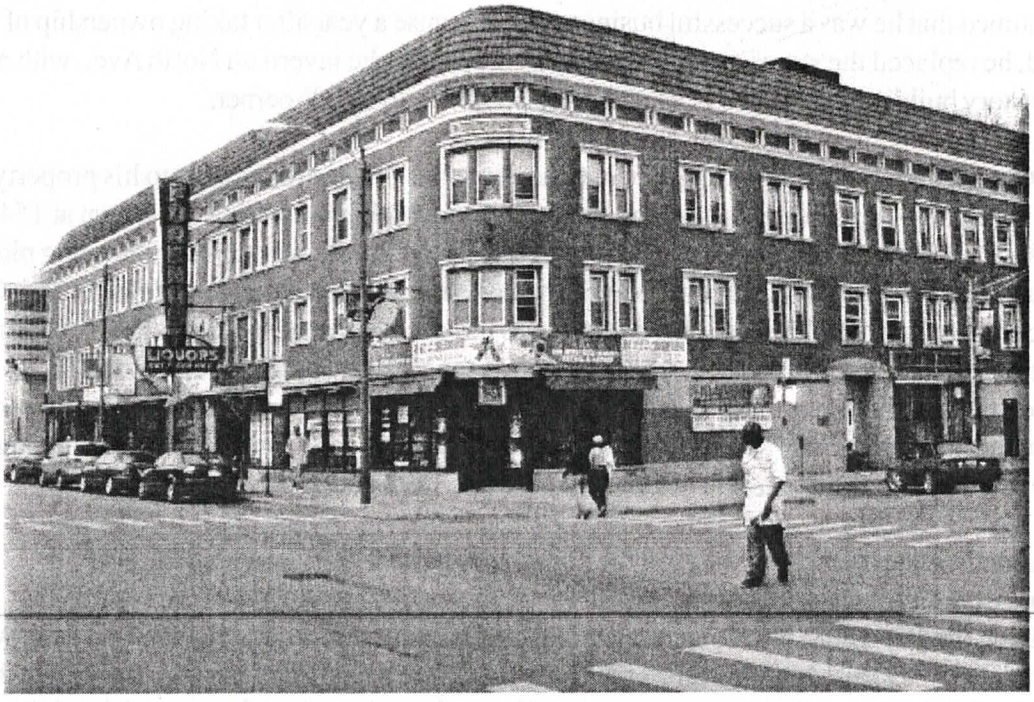
Above: Frank Schoeninger's tavern and hotel on the corner of Clark St. and North Ave., ca. 1921. The Village Theatre (then called the Germania Theater) vertical sign is visible on the far left. Right: Announcement for the new theater building (*Chicago Tribune,* 26 Oct. 1915). Herman L. Gumbiner, a major operator of one of the city's early "first-generation" movie theater chains, is named as lessee of the building. Below: Movie advertisement for the Germania Theater (*Chicago Tribune*, 20 June 1917).

NEW PLAYHOUSE FOR NORTH SIDE

Moving Picture Theater to Be Built at North Avenue and Clark St.

A moving picture theater with a seating capacity of 1,000, to cost $75,000, is to be erected by Frank Schoeninger on his property at the southwest corner of North Clark street and North avenue. The lot fronts 120 feet on Clark street and 150 feet on North avenue, and Mr. Schoeninger will improve with a building to contain in addition to the theater two stores and offices on the south seventy feet.

He has leased the entire building, including the theater, through White & Tabor, to H. L. Gumbiner, who conducts several theaters in various parts of the city and in Hammond, for a term of ten years at an annual rental of $7,000. Plans for the building, which is to be of attractive design, are being prepared by Architect Adolph Werner. Mr. Gumbiner is now building a 1,500 seat theater at the northeast corner of Lincoln and Lawrence avenues, the ground under which had been leased to him through White & Tabor. The same brokers also lease to him the ground under the Paulina theater, at Elk and Paulina streets, for ninety-nine years.



The Villas Amusement Co. (later Gumbiner Theatrical Enterprises) operated numerous "first-generation" movie theaters in Chicago neighborhoods, including the Argmore Theater (above) at Argyle St. and Kenmore Ave. in the Edgewater neighborhood; and the Bertha Theater (below) at Lincoln Ave. and Giddings St. in the Lincoln Square neighborhood. Both built in 1913, their auditoriums were later removed and converted into retail space.

which measured 120 by 150 feet, was occupied by several small storefronts and included a nickelodeon and a three-story corner tavern and hotel, of which he served as a bartender. It is presumed that he was a successful businessman, because a year after taking ownership of the land, he replaced the stores and nickelodeon, adjacent to the tavern on North Ave., with a new two-story building designed by German-born architect Adolph Woerner.

On October 26, 1915, Schoeninger began the next phase of improvements to his property by having a 1,000-seat theater, stores and office structure built just south of the tavern at 1546-1550 N. Clark St. The *Chicago Tribune* announced construction of the new "moving picture theater" and estimated its cost at $75,000 (the building permit estimated the cost as $45, 000). Once again, **Adolph Woerner (1878-1966)** was hired to design the building. Built exclusively for motion picture use, this theater, now known as the Village Theatre, is one of the "first-generation" early movie theaters in Chicago. Little is known about Woerner, although records from the *American Contractor*, a journal for the building trades, credit him with designing over 100 buildings on the north side of Chicago between 1898 and 1912.

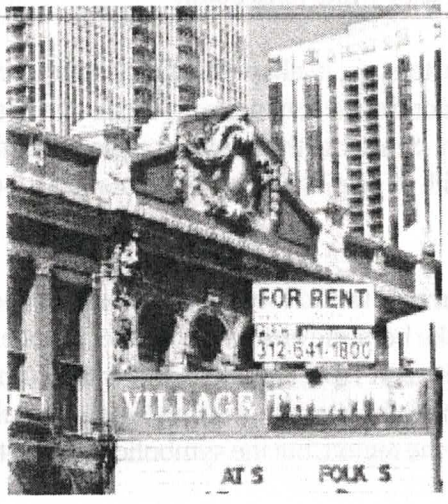
Just south of the theater building, on the corner of Clark St. and Germania Pl., was the impressive Germania Club. A social club for members of Chicago's German society, the building (built in 1888) was a visual anchor in the German community. When the theater was completed in 1916, it was christened the Germania Theater, likely due to its proximity to the Germania Club, as well as to attract a more affluent clientele such as frequented the club.

In addition, Schoeninger leased the entire building to Herman L. Gumbiner (1879-1952) and his company, The Villas Amusement Company (later Gumbiner Theatrical Enterprises). Gumbiner, along with his brothers, operated numerous neighborhood theaters in Chicago and Hammond, Indiana, and was one of the major early motion picture theater chains in Chicago. Theaters operated by the Gumbiners include: the Paulina and Commodore (both demolished); the Bertha and Argmore (auditoriums removed); and the New Blaine, a movie "palace" theater later renamed (and currently) the Music Box Theatre.

The Village Theatre is a handsome, moderately-sized "theater block" building, that combined a movie theater with street-level stores and second-story offices. It is built with red pressed brick and trimmed with white glazed terra cotta. The building is chiefly designed in the Classical- and Renaissance-Revival architectural styles, but has Baroque elements with Germanic symbolism.

The street façade has a symmetrical arrangement, with a central theater entrance and separate entrances to the upstairs offices at opposite ends of the building. Each upper-story entrance has a deeply-recessed alcove lined with brick and white, carved-wood panels. A limestone slab step, inset with hexagonal tiles, is inside each alcove. Each alcove is framed with white terra cotta and brick pilasters on a base of gray terra cotta, made to imitate granite. The pilasters are topped with a triangular, white terra-cotta pediment.

The entrance to the theater, modified in recent years, has six steel and glass doors and is lined with non-original pink marble tiles and flanked by shadowbox-style signboard frames. The storefront to the north of the theater entrance retains its original historical configuration: a



Above: A current view of the Village Theatre, designed in the Classical and Renaissance Revival architectural style. Middle: Above the theater's modern marquee are four round-arched windows (partially obscured). Below: One of the Village Theatre's storefronts retains its original window configuration, and a Classical Revival terra-cotta pediment denotes the deeply-recessed entrance alcove to the upstairs offices.

recessed entrance with a single door, and fixed display windows on a base of gray terra cotta, with fixed transom windows above. The flanking storefront to the south has been modified with recessed double doors, smaller display windows placed flush with the doors; and brick replaces the gray terra-cotta base.

The most visually-playful portion of the Village Theatre is the upper story. Symmetrical in design, it is heavily-ornamented in polychromatic terra cotta replete with German symbolism. The upper story is five bays wide, with a large central bay and a triangular parapet clad with terra cotta and ornamented with a cartouche and swags of oak leaves. Below the parapet is a set of four arcaded, round-arched windows with ornamental keystones accented with acorns. In Germany, oak trees are revered and acorns have long been considered a symbol of good luck. Under the parapet,the Classical-styled cornice (which is electrified with original lightbulb sockets) also has small acorns in each groove.

The outermost bays have pairs of modern one-over-one, double-hung windows with metal sashes. A brick pilaster with a white terra-cotta capital separates each window. At the base of each window is a wrought-iron window box, original to the building, and a low-relief terra-cotta panel with a floral design. Over the windows is a string course of white terra cotta.

Between the pairs of windows are large terra-cotta pilasters, six in all, with gaped-mouth, sculpted character heads. Each has a "wig" of oak leaves with acorns suspended from them; and a large bow around its neck with a cluster of horns and a violin. Since the theater was originally called the "Germania"—after the Germania Club, a social club with its origins in men's choral music—the terra-cotta characters are depicted as "singing."

Another symbol is a "double cross," made of white terra cotta and located at the base of each pilaster. Known as the Cross of Lorraine, it is part of the heraldic arms of Lorraine, France. The region was annexed to Germany along with Alsace between 1871 and 1918, but was returned to France after World War I. It is unknown whether Frank Schoeninger, Adolph Woerner or the Gumbiner family immigrated to the United States from the region, but the symbolic intent of the architect's design is unmistakable.

North Avenue and Chicago's German-American Community

The second half of the 19th century was an age of tremendous growth for Chicago. By 1893, when the rebuilt metropolis dazzled the world with the World's Columbian Exposition and its "White City," Chicago had grown into a metropolis of more than one million. Its new inhabitants came from all parts of Europe and created neighborhoods that, in their smells, appearances, and sounds, were reminders of their former homes.

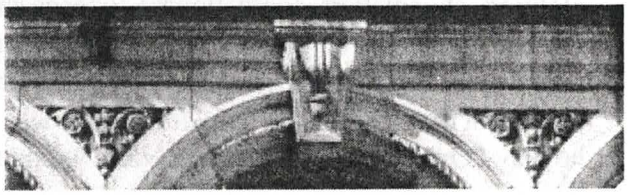
Germans had been among the first Europeans to settle in Chicago, and as early as the 1850s they were one of the city's largest ethnic groups, rivaled only by the Irish. Many were leaving the German states in search of political freedom, in the wake of failed democratic revolutions there in 1848. By the American Civil War, Germans made up 40.5 percent of all foreign-born inhabitants in the city.

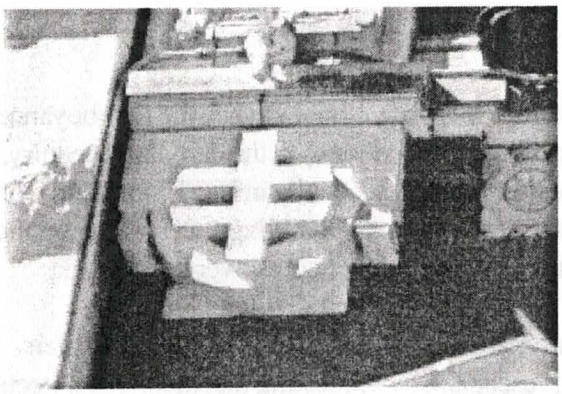
The Village Theatre (originally the Germania Theater) is heavily-ornamented with terra cotta, replete with German symbolism.

Above: A polychrome character head with musical instruments is depicted as "singing" in honor of the neighboring Germania Club, a social club with its origins in men's choral music. The head also wears a Baroque-style "wig" of oak leaves and acorns. In Germany, oak trees are revered, and acorns are a symbol of good luck.

Above right: A detail of the terra-cotta cornice with small acorns carved into each of its grooves.

Below right: A decorative keystone on the theater's round-arched window with an acorn ornament.





Below left: The Cross of Lorraine is part of the heraldic arms of Lorraine, France. The region (along with Alsace) was annexed to Germany between 1871 and 1918, but was returned to France after World War I.

The 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s saw their number swell enormously, with over 300,000 German-speaking immigrants arriving in Chicago during those three decades. By 1900 native-born Germans and their children made up almost a quarter of the city's population. These new Chicagoans settled in all parts of the city. However, several neighborhoods became strongly German in population and character, including the Near Northwest Side along Milwaukee Avenue between downtown and North Avenue; the area around Humboldt Park; and the "Heart of Chicago" neighborhood near Damen Avenue and 22nd Street (now Cermak Road).

But the most prominent local community of Germans was the North Side. As early as the 1850s, a German neighborhood had arisen north of Chicago Avenue and east of Clark Street, where many new immigrants had established breweries and other businesses. Others had established small farms in the area now known as the Old Town Triangle, west of Clark Street. After the Chicago Fire of 1871, many of these Germans moved farther north, to the Lincoln Park neighborhood and to Lake View, a suburb that was annexed to Chicago in 1889. At the turn of the century, Germans were a dominant force on the North Side, forming a majority of citizens in the area bounded by Division, Belmont, Lake Michigan, and the Chicago River. Wealthy German businessmen built fine homes near Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan, while middle- and working-class families lived in small, affordable cottages and flat buildings farther west.

North Avenue was rapidly becoming one of the chief commercial streets for the North Side's German-American community. It developed especially after 1887, the year of the Yondorf Block and Hall's construction (designated a Chicago Landmark in 2001), when newly established streetcar service along North Avenue made the area readily accessible. A tour brochure of 1938 called the street the "Unter den Linden of Chicago," referring to Berlin's famous boulevard of fashion and culture.

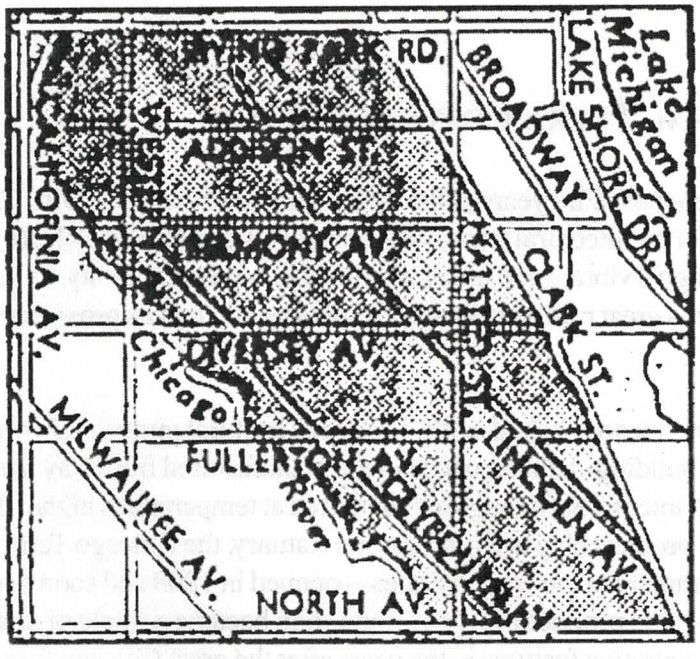
A former president of the North Avenue Business and Improvement Association (William Rauen, in a 1930 interview) recalled it as a bustling street by 1890, built up with dozens of stores, including clothiers, shoemakers, confectioners, tobacco shops, druggists, bakers and grocers. Rauen remembered: "The language spoken along the street was nine-tenths German and there was no occasion for folks from Tier, Luxembourg, the Rhineland and Bavaria to feel homesick." A columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* (Alex Small, 1957) remembered that during the street's heyday, "One could not get around North Avenue without that language [German]."

The Architectural Style of the Village Theatre

Architects of the first-generation movie houses sought a middle ground between the flamboyance of vaudeville theaters and the dinginess of the storefront nickelodeons. In the early 20th century, classical forms were traditionally used in theater designs, and occasionally infused with Italian- or French-influenced elements. Theaters, like libraries and government buildings, were sober public spaces that represented the "moral middle," with no seating arrangements governed by rank.

By 1914 theatre operators realized that people came to the movies to escape the grind of their daily worries, so efforts were made to facilitate this escapism by requesting that theater architects

Above: German-owned businesses on North Ave., looking east from Larabee St., 1909. North Avenue was one of the chief commercial streets for the North Side's German-American community, who by 1900 made up almost a quarter of the city's population. Below: Map indicating the settlement area (shaded) of the German population in early North Side Chicago *(Chicago Tribune,* 29 Oct. 1961).



do more to integrate elaborate and foreign motifs into their buildings. By drawing upon the designs of northern Europe, the architects made the theaters emulate the hotels and estates of the very rich, thus attracting more movie-goers. This is apparent in the design of the Village Theatre. Designed in 1916 by Adolph Woerner, the building is a blend of the Classical Revival and Renaissance Revival architectural styles and incorporated elements of German symbolism.

Classical Revival Style
The Classical Revival style became popular in the 1890s due to the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 and remained popular well into the 1920s. Buildings constructed in this style utilize a variety of Classical forms and details derived from a variety of sources, including the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome as well as the later Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo periods. The Classical Revival style emphasized symmetrical facades through a minimal use of bays, towers and other building elements and instead focused on Classical ornament, including columns, cornices and triangular pediments. Buildings of the Classical Revival style were clad in a variety of materials, including brick, stone, terra cotta and wood. The Village Theatre possesses elements characteristic of the style, including its triangle pediments over the doorways, pilasters and cornice with dentils fashioned in terra cotta.

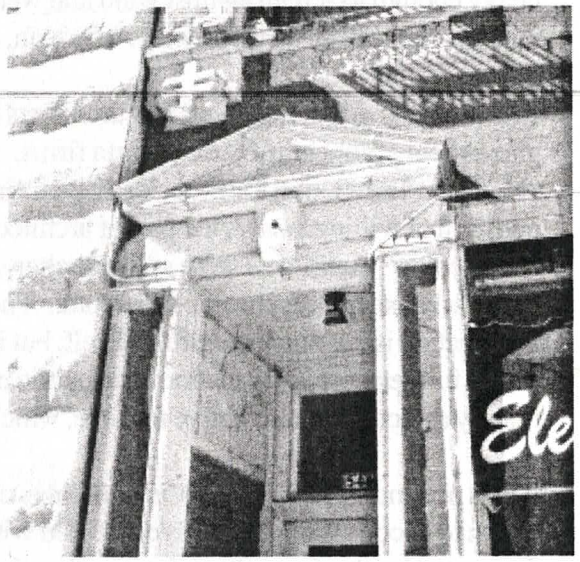
Renaissance Revival Style
The churches and palaces of Renaissance Italy were the inspiration for this revival style. In Chicago, it was mainly used for churches and institutional buildings between 1890 and 1930. Common characteristics to the style include round-arched windows and arcades (i.e., covered walkways or porches, formed by rows of arches resting on columns), a profusion of triangular and round-arched pediments, a belt course separating the first floor from the upper stories, rusticated quoins, and prominent cornices. Characteristic of the style are the Village Theatre's four round-arched, arcaded windows located on the central bay above the marquee. The windows are ornamented with terra-cotta surrounds and are accented with ornamental keystones with acorn motifs.

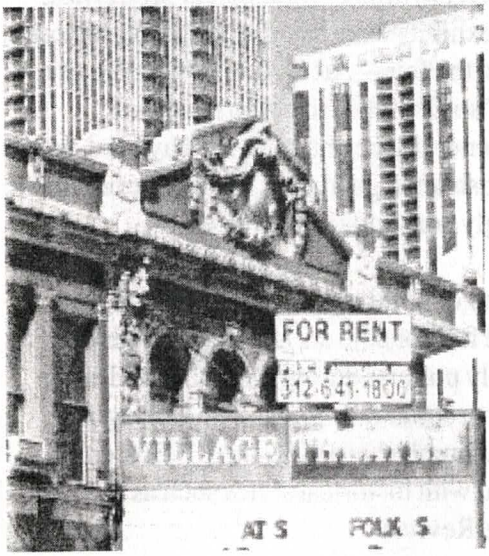
Architectural Terra Cotta in Chicago

From the immediate post-Fire years of the 1870s through the early 1930s, Chicago was a leading American center for architectural terra-cotta design and manufacture. Terra-cotta factories took advantage of Chicago's vibrant and innovative architectural community, its strategic location at the center of the nation's great railroad transportation network, and its proximity to clay deposits in nearby Indiana.

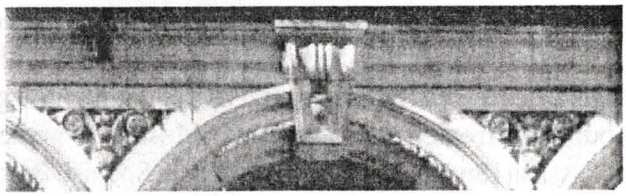
In Italian, terra cotta means "baked earth." For architectural purposes, however, terra cotta generally refers to building cladding or ornament manufactured from clay hand-molded or cast into hollow blocks with internal stiffening webs and fired at temperatures higher than used for brick. Developed first to produce clay urns and garden statuary, the Chicago Terra Cotta Company—the first terra-cotta company in the United States—opened in 1868 and soon expanded into architectural terra-cotta production. Terra cotta soon became a staple of architects seeking fireproofing and decorative features in the years after the great Chicago Fire of 1871.

The Village Theatre is chiefly designed in the Classical Revival architectural style, a style made popular in the 1890s due to the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 (upper left). It possesses elements characteristic of the style, including the building's triangle pediments, pilasters and cornice with dentils fashioned in terra cotta (middle left and right).





The theatre also possesses elements characteristic of the Renaissance Revival architectural style, such as its four round-arched windows with keystones located above the marquee (bottom left and right).



After the Fire, when it became apparent that cast-iron structural members in destroyed buildings had melted in the extreme heat, and brick and granite had broken and crumbled, terra cotta came into its own as a protective, fireproof building material. Terra cotta was used to encase cast-iron structural supports such as I-beams and columns, as well as floor joists and partitions, and as backing for exterior walls. Terra-cotta cornices were also in high demand because of their relative lightness (in comparison with stone) and perceived durability.

Use of terra cotta expanded when Chicago passed an ordinance in 1886 requiring that all buildings over ninety feet in height should be absolutely fireproof. Builders of skyscrapers found terra cotta an attractive medium because of its lightness, durability (crisp details did not erode over time and could easily be cleaned), and potential for decorative uses (terra cotta's plastic quality allowed for highly original ornament)—all attributes which stemmed from the nature of the material. The use of terra cotta was further supported in a 1913 article from the *Brickbuilder,* titled "Architectural Terra Cotta—Its Rational Development." It indicated that since the introduction of steel frame construction, the secondary cladding material need only be heavy enough to screen against wind and weather. By 1900, three nationally-important terra cotta companies—Northwestern, American, and Midland—were all headquartered in Chicago.

In these early years, however, few architects took advantage of the opportunities for colored glazes being pioneered by terra-cotta firms. Even an 1898 article from *The Brickbuilder,* titled "Notes on Terra Cotta for Exterior Polychrome Decoration," stated, "it seems to have been a question of willingness on the part of architects rather than the public that has thus deterred the use of color." Architects were still apprehensive about the use of color, and the Village Theatre is an early use of polychrome terra cotta. The *Brickbuilder* in 1913 stated, "Polychrome architecture is not only beautiful in itself, but it would tend to revivify our almost obliterated color sense; furthermore, it would increase public interest in buildings." Terra cotta was viewed mainly as a cheaper alternative to stone, which it often imitated in color.

It was not until the late 1920s that buildings clad with multi-colored, or polychromed, terra cotta began to become popular. This coincided with a change in architectural taste and style generated by the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes,* held in Paris in 1925. Many of the fair's buildings and exhibits were designed in a non-historic manner that later became known by a name taken from the fair—Art Deco. Conceived as a modern architectural style for a fast-paced, "Jazz Age" society, the Art Deco style as it developed during the late 1920s and early 1930s can generally be characterized by hard-edged building forms, exotic human and animal figures, and abstracted geometric and foliate ornament. Many Art Deco-style buildings also use color in strikingly non-traditional ways.

Small-scale commercial streets in Chicago have a variety of buildings that reflect the architectural styles and detailing that were common and fashionable during their periods of development. Terra cotta-clad buildings were especially popular during the 1920s and early 1930s as the styles, colors, and details possible with terra cotta multiplied. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey (CHRS) documents a great number of 1920s- and 1930s-era buildings fronted with terra cotta. Most are ornamented with historical styles such as the Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, and Spanish Baroque Revival.

The Village Theatre is an early example of a building using polychrome terra cotta. Manufactured by the Midland Terra Cotta Company, the building's terra cotta has expressive figurative heads with "wigs" of oak leaves and acorns, festoons and musical instruments are made with green, brown, yellow and red matte-glazed terra cotta, in addition to the white terra cotta used on most of the classical elements of the building.

Later History

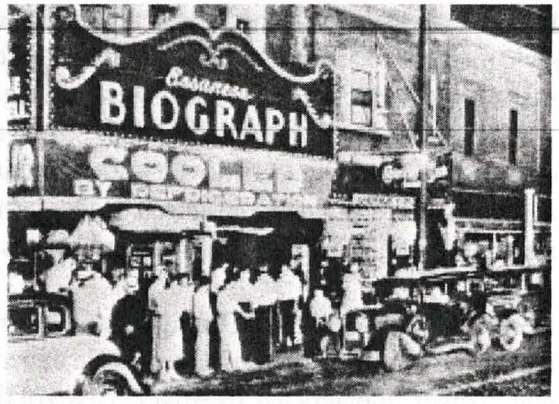
Most of the early changes to the Village Theatre came in the form of name changes. The U.S. participation in World War I raised anti-German sentiments and suspicions against immigrants throughout the city, and, as a result, many businesses with German-sounding names Americanized them to prove their patriotism. The neighboring Germania Club changed its name to the Lincoln Club; and the "Germania" theater removed its prominent marquee and changed its name to the "Parkside." Anti-German sentiment, coupled with Prohibition in 1920, forced Frank Schoeninger out of the tavern business, and he returned to Wisconsin to retire.

In 1931, the theater's name was changed to the "Gold Coast," and a new horizontal awning-style marquee was installed (similar to that of the Biograph Theater). By 1944, the theater's seating was reduced to 932 seats from the original 1,000, presumably for larger, upholstered seating. Three years later modifications were made to the theater lobby to include concessions counters, a Depression-era novelty not found in original, "first-generation" theaters. In 1954, the auditorium was again reconfigured to accommodate wide-screen "Cinemascope" projections. It remained the Gold Coast Theater for 31 years.

Herman L. Gumbiner left Chicago for California in the 1920s to try his hand at operating theaters for the movie-going public out west. He experienced moderate success with the "Los Angeles" and "Tower" theaters in Los Angeles (two of that city's great movie palaces), but was hit hard by the Depression. His brother Abraham and other family members stayed and continued to operate theaters through his company, Gumbiner Theatrical Enterprises, until the company was dissolved in 1943.

In 1962, the Gold Coast Theater underwent a $50,000 renovation and reopened as the "Globe Theater." It is believed that at this time the horizontal, awning-style marquee was modified to the prow-shaped marquee style seen today. Five years later the theater was threatened with demolition as part of the Sandburg Village redevelopment. Illinois State Representative William J. Schoeninger, original owner Frank Schoeninger's son, was still living on a portion of the property and refused to allow the land to be redeveloped.

The final name change came in 1967, when the building was renamed the Village Theatre after the Sandburg Village development nearby. After another $50,000 was spent on renovations, the Village Theatre showed movies and served as a screening venue for the Chicago International Film Festival before briefly being used for stage plays in the 1970s. In early 1991 the interior of the theater was divided into four screens in order to compete with a "multiplex" theater that



Above: The Village Theatre, ca. 1950s. The theater operated as the Gold Coast Theater from 1931 to 1962. The vertical sign was replaced with an awning-style marquee, similar to that of the Biograph Theater (right). Below: The marquee was again replaced with a prow-shaped marquee in the late 1960s.

opened nearby. The Village Theatre continued to show second-run movies until it closed in spring 2007.

The Village Theatre is an orange-rated building in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Village Theatre be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History
Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Village Theatre is a significant "first-generation" movie theater in Chicago dating from the 1910s; it remains one of the best of the remaining such theaters, many of which have been demolished or remodeled for other purposes.

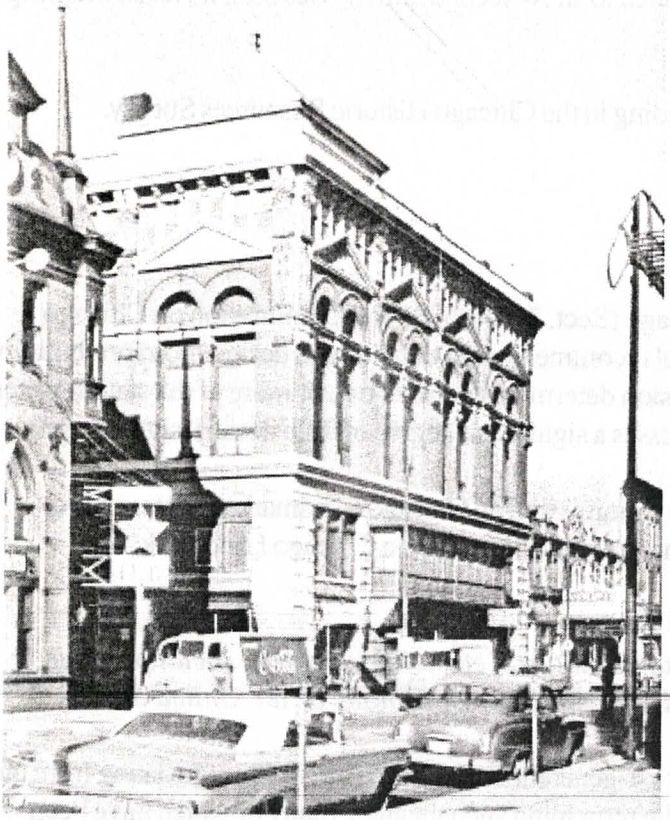
- The Village Theatre is one of the last-remaining theaters associated with the Gumbiner Brothers. Operating under several business names over three decades, the Gumbiners theater chain was one of the major early motion picture theater chains in Chicago. The company operated more than a dozen movie theaters in Chicago.

- The Village Theatre has served for decades as an important neighborhood entertainment venue for Chicago's Near North Side, showing first-run "moving pictures" in its early years, and later as a venue for stage plays, second-run movies, and "art house" films for the Chicago International Film Festival.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture
Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Village Theatre is a rare-surviving and significant example of a "first-generation" movie theater, designed in 1916 by German-born architect Adolph Woerner exclusively for motion picture use.

- The Village Theatre is an excellent early example of a "theater-block," a building type combining a movie theater with stores and offices. This moderate-sized, two-story commercial building contained a theater, two street-level stores, and five second-floor offices.



Enlarged inset

Above and inset: A 1961 view of the then-Gold Coast Theater; in 1962 it was renamed the Globe Theater. Below left: The Chicago International Film Festival used the Village Theatre in 1969 (and later years) as a venue to screen "art house" films until the theater was modified for the stage. Bottom right: The stage play "1947" was premiered at the Village Theatre in 1977 (*Chicago Tribune*, 11 Dec. 1977).

Chicago's FILM FESTIVAL

Nov. 8-20

Village Theater Clark Street & North Avenue

This year the Festival will again bring to Chicago for their United States premiere, the finest and most respected new international films in all categories. The 5th Chicago International Film Festival will present a diversified collection of motion pictures from the feature film to the short subject, including television productions and commercials, industrial and educational film, lectures by visiting film directors and three days devoted to new developments in student films. In addition, there will be the latest trends in multi-media film techniques and public service programming, and two comprehensive film retrospectives.

Ticket Reservations & Program Information, call

Chicago International Film Festival Headquarters
MI 2-3111
During Festival . . . Village Theatre—642-1200

Tickets are available at the box office or at all Ticketron outlets, Ticket Center and all Marshall Field and Montgomery Ward stores.

Village Theatre—1548 North Clark Street—Festival Box Office opens 6:00 pm Sat. Nov. 5

For mail orders, write to: Chicago International Film Festival
226 West Eugenie Street
Chicago, Illinois 60614

Each Program (Tickets included): $2.50

New Director Series (4 Feature Films): $7.50

Students (with current ID) and Senior Citizens (Over 65) All Regular Festival Film Programs: $1.50

Jay Robert Nash (left) recounts the final days of Al Capone (right) in "1947."

Theater

Bullets, blood, or badmen: For Nash, crime does pay

- The Village Theatre is elaborately decorated with unusual and outstanding ornament and craftsmanship in white and polychrome terra cotta. Its fine details, including its round-arched windows, triangular parapet with oak-leaf swags and cartouche, low-relief floral panels, and "singing" figurative heads with "wigs" of leaves and acorns, surrounded by musical instruments, are designed in a combination of the Classical and Renaissance architectural styles, with Baroque Revival and Germanic influences and symbolism. The use of polychrome terra cotta remains a particularly early example.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- With the adjacent Germania Club Building, the Village Theatre forms an established and familiar visual feature on the Near North Side.

Integrity Criterion

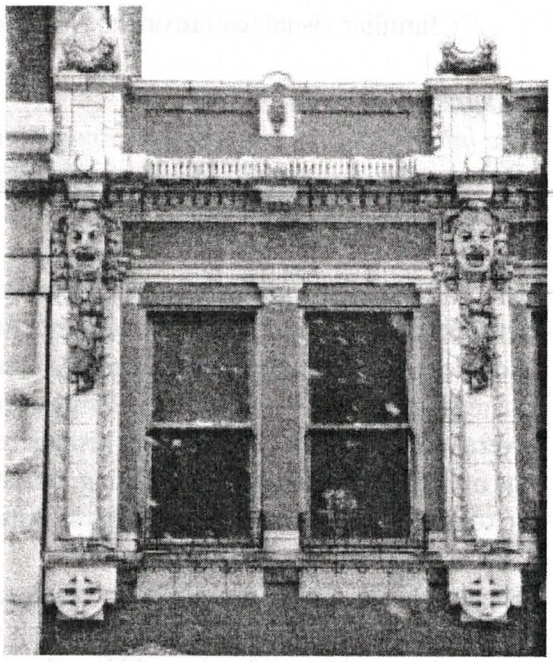
The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

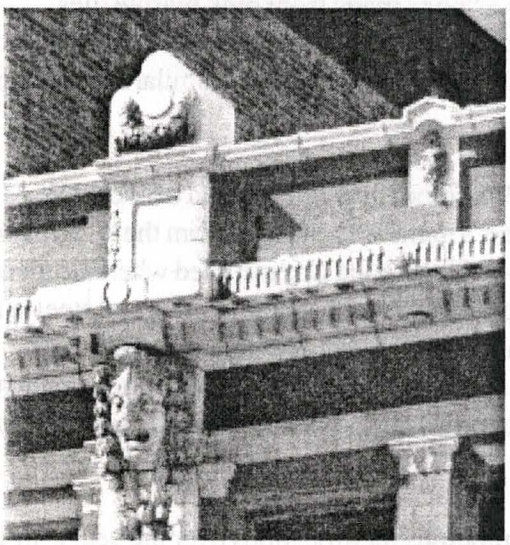
The Village Theatre possesses excellent exterior physical integrity, displaying through its siting, scale, setbacks and overall design its historic relationship to the Near North Side neighborhood. Additionally, with the adjacent Germania Club Building it forms an ensemble of buildings with a shared historical association with German-American history. The Village Theatre retains its historic overall exterior form and almost all historic exterior materials and detailing, including such features as the majority of its terra-cotta detailing; its entrance alcoves to the upper story; wrought-iron window boxes, and one of its two original storefronts.

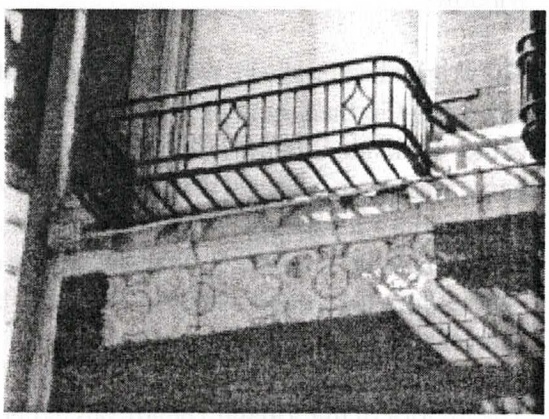
The terra-cotta theater entrance was covered over by a "box" made from pink marble tiles sometime during the 1970s. The building's upper-story windows are modern one-over-one and double-hung with metal sashes. Although not original, their configurations are similar to the original windows.

The original vertical sign was removed as early as 1918 coinciding with the end of World War I, when anti-German sentiment ran high, when the theater's name was changed from the "Germania" to the "Parkside." In the 1930s a horizontal, awning-style marquee was installed when the theater's name was again changed to the "Gold Coast." The current prow-shaped marquee and steel-and-glass doors are believed to be modifications made in the 1960s when the theater's name was changed to the "Globe." In all instances the changes are reversible and relatively minor, nor do they detract from the theater's ability to express its historic community, architectural and aesthetic interest and value.

The interior of the Village Theatre has experienced numerous modifications over the years. In 1944, the number of seats in the auditorium seating was reduced, presumably for larger, upholstered seating, and in 1947 its lobby was "modernized" to include concessions counters. In 1954, the







Architectural brick, terra cotta, and wrought-iron ornamentation on the Village Theatre displays an extraordinarily high level of quality of fine detailing and craftsmanship.

auditorium was again reconfigured to accommodate wide-screen "Cinemascope" projections, and modifications were made for stage plays in the 1970s. The last major change occurred in 1991, when the theater was divided into four screens in order to compete with the "multiplex" theater nearby, subsequently reducing the theater's seating to 700 from the original 1,000. The interior of the Village Theatre is not being considered for designation.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the Village Theatre, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Arnold L. Randall, Commissioner
Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Landmarks

Project Staff
Susan Perry, research, writing, photography and layout
Terry Tatum, editing
Brian Goeken, editing

Illustrations

"BWChicago" (on www.flickr.com website): pp. 5, 9 (top), 16 (bot.);
From *Chicago Architecture, 1872-1922*, Art Institute of Chicago: p. 13 (top);
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Commission on Chicago Landmarks: pp. 3, 7, 9 (mid. & bot. right, bot.), 13 (mid. left & right, bot. left & right), 20;
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Printed February 2008; Revised and Reprinted January 2009